Marion Sikes

The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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A Little Song.

Sing a song of summer-time
Coming by and by—
Four and twenty blackbirds
Sailing through the sky;
When the season opens
They'll all begin to sing,
And make the finest concert
Ever heard upon the wing.
Blackbirds, yellow birds,
Robins, and the wrens,
All coming home again
When the winter ends.

Sing a song of summer-time
Coming very soon,
With the beauties of the May,
The glory of the June.
Now the busy farmer toils,
Intent on crops and money;
Now the velvet bees are out
Hunting after honey;
Well they know the flowery nooks,
Bathed in sunshine mellow,
Where the morning-glories are,
And roses pink and yellow.

The maiden in the garden,
Hanging up the clothes,
Fears no more the cruel frost
To nip her pretty nose;
She flings the linen o'er the line,
Nor heeds the breezes blowing,
For yonder is her lover
In the meadow-lot a-mowing.
While she lingers at her work
To catch a nod and smile,
Merry winds have snatched the clothes
And blown them half a mile.—*Sel.*

Little children, learn, I pray,
When you work or when you play;
If it's night or if it's day,
God can see you—yes, alway.

Bert's Queer Gift.

A careless nail had torn Bert's coat, but Aunt Marion had just finished the bit of delicate darning that made the jagged rent invisible. She was shaking out the garment to hang it away, when something dropped from one of the pockets, and fell on to the carpet at her feet. She picked it up—a little brown leafy roll—sniffed its odor disdainfully, and resisting her first inclination to toss it into the grate, slowly laid it on the table beside her.

"Well, that is just what I have suspected for some time," she said. "Poor Bert! I suppose he thinks himself on the sure road to manliness now."

The words were spoken only to herself, however; she said nothing to any one else about it, though she sat for a few minutes with a very thoughtful face, before she hung the coat away, and took up other work. If Bert missed anything from his pocket, he made no inquiries. He was thankful that Aunt Marion made none; and he soon forgot the affair, in what he considered more important matters, Chief among these was his birthday, which came a few days later; and it was a very bright face which greeted the parcels that lay beside his plate at breakfast.

"But what was this?" he asked with a puzzled look, as, in among the books, the telescope, and half a dozen other things that he wanted, he discovered a neat little box holding only a short steel chain.

"That? Why that is a wrist-chain," answered Aunt Marion with great earnestness, as if the question were a surprising one. "Is it the right size, I wonder? I had to guess at that." She

came around to his side, and lifting the chain, slipped a steel ring attached to it over his little finger; then drawing the ends of the chain down, she fastened them around his wrist. "Fits exactly, doesn't it?" she said enthusiastically.

"Yes'm, but—" Bert hesitated. From her manner he fancied that it was something he ought to know all about and appreciate very highly, but he really could not see its value. "What is it for, Aunt Marion?"

"Why, to wear on your wrist. Don't you see?" replied his aunt, giving another twist and settling it to her satisfaction.

"Some new fashion that I haven't heard about, I suppose," muttered Bert to himself, looking dolefully at his new adornment as he carried his treasures up to his room. "Women have a fancy for every new-fangled notion, so I presume auntie thinks this is something very nice; but I declare, I don't see the sense of it."

He appreciated it still less as he went about his morning work. It caught, tangled, and obtruded itself disagreeably.

"Not very convenient," he ventured to suggest to Aunt Marion. But the lady only answered placidly,—

"Oh, I don't think you will mind that very much when you once get accustomed to it."

So she really expected him to wear the troublesome thing and get used to it! He was pondering the subject when his friend Ralph came in to see the new telescope.

"Hello! what are you wearing that dog-collar for?" he questioned curiously, as Bert displayed his hand in arranging the glass.

"It's a new thing. Didn't you ever see one before?" asked Bert, coloring a little.

"Lots of them—on the necks of canines," declared Ralph with unceremonious frankness; "but I don't see what you want to wear one on your arm for.

"Well, the fact is, I don't,'" confessed Bert, "but I don't know exactly what to do about it. You see, it is one of my birthday-gifts—some new-fashioned arrangement that has taken auntie's fancy."

It was a fashion of which Ralph had never heard, and he said so. His visits and comments left Bert still less pleased with the odd gift he had received. At last he decided to talk it over with Aunt Marion.

"You see, I'm ever so much obliged to you, auntie, but I don't just know what to do with the thing," he explained. "What is the good of wearing it?"

"Oh, I don't suppose there is any good in it," answered Aunt Marion serenely.

"Well, I don't think it is very—ornamental, you know," ventured Bert, hesitatingly.

"Oh, dear, no!—not the least bit ornamental," assented his aunt.

"And, besides, it's inconvenient."

"Probably; but I think you would grow accustomed to that after awhile, and not notice it much."

"But what is the use of getting accustomed to it—a chain like that?" demanded Bert, growing more and more bewildered. "What would you want to wear it for?"

"I? Oh, I wouldn't want to wear it for anything," declared Aunt Marion as placedly as before. "It is unsightly, inconvenient, and utterly useless. I wouldn't wear it, but your taste might be different."

"You must have a high opinion of my supply of common sense, Aunt Marion!" Bert flushed indignantly. "Do you think I am silly enough to like what nobody else would want?"

"I have been studying your tastes lately, and you seem to like some things that are just what you describe my gift to be," pursued Aunt Marion, drawing a cigar from her work-table and laying it in Bert's hand. "Here is this, for instance, that rolled from your pocket the other day. Is the habit of smoking useful to body or soul, Bert? Is it ornamental? Isn't it considerable trouble to acquire? and will it not be expensive and often inconvenient to yourself and disagreeable to others after it is acquired? Is it anything, after all, but a *chain*, my boy?" Bert said nothing; he only threw the cigar into the fire and walked away. But he answered rather curtly a day or two later—though no one but Ralph understood him—when a companion invited him to smoke, "No, thank you. I have one more dog-collar than I have any use for, hanging in my room now."—*Sel.*

MAKE your life beautiful in the sight of men, and show them the sweetness and power of Christianity. Be conscientious in little things. Let the Master's spirit shine through every hour of your life. In school, in shop or field, in society, the young Christian ought to be the most faithful, the most coruteous, the most generous and kindly, the noblest of any person there.

"Something Has Gone Wrong."

"Why, that's not four o'clock! I'm certain it can not be so late!', exclaimed Minnie, starting from the seat on which she had been amusing herself with a book, while her work lay neglected beside her. "I looked at the great clock not ten minutes ago, and I'm sure the long hand had not reached quarter past three."

"Oh, did you not know that something is the matter with the great clock?" replied her aunt, who, with her bonnet and shawl on, had just come down stairs, prepared to accompany her on a walk. "Since yesterday it has gone quite wrong; it strikes one hour and points to another. I think the hands must be loose."

"Something has gone wrong indeed!" cried the child with impatience, "and I will never trust it again!"

She looked up and saw a quiet smile on the face of the lady. "Aunt, what are you thinking of?" she said quickly.

Her aunt glanced down at the unfinished seam, from which the needle and thread hung dangling. "Did you not promise to have that ready before four?" said she.

"Yes," replied Minnie, looking a little ashamed; "but—but—"

"But there is somebody, I fear, besides the great clock whose hands are in fault,—who is swift to promise and slow to perform,—whose words say one thing and whose actions say another. Shall I repeat your own words, Minnie, and say, 'Something has gone wrong indeed, and I will never trust her again?"

Dear young reader, ever keep this in mind—that our words and our actions should agree together, as the hands of a good clock with the chime of its bell. Never make a promise rashly, but if once made, let no pleasure, no feeling of indolence, tempt you for one moment to break it. Let no one ever be able to say, in speaking of the word which you had given but not kept, 'Something has gone wrong indeed, and I will never trust him again!"—*Child's Record.*

The eyes of a crow are sharper than the eyes of a dove, but the dove will find the wheat first, while the crow will find the carrion. If your eyes are sharp to detect faults, and dull to detect goodness in others, pray for the soul of the dove, lest you learn to feed on carrion, like the crow. —*Sel.*

His Big Friend.

A crowd gathered on a wharf in San Francisco had an opportunity to see a dog rescue another dog from drowning and go about his work as intelligently as if he had been the trained officer of a humane society.

A small terrier dog fell from the stringer of the wharf into the bay. He swam around for some time in a circle and many plans were suggested for his rescue, but none of them proved practical. The little creature seemed doomed to a watery grave, for he was fast becoming exhausted. The female portion of the audience was much exercised and gave many expressions of pity.

Just at the moment that all hopes of saving the terrier were given up, the bark of a dog in the crowd attracted attention, and there appeared upon the stringer, in front of the wharf, a large Newfoundland.

He saw the little fellow in the water, and with a low wail he ran to and fro along the wharf for a moment or two, and then, to the surprise of every one present, he sprang into the water, and at once swam to the terrier.

Seizing him by the neck with his teeth, after swimming about for some time, he sighted the new sea-wall extension, about a hundred yards distant, for which he headed.

Upon landing his burden on terra-firma, the Newfoundland gave two or three sharp barks, and seemed to be proud of what he had done. It was some time before the terrier was able to gain strength to walk away.

One of the witnesses of the strange sight, patted the Newfoundland dog, and said: "This dog is mine, and I would not take $1000 for him at this moment."—*Sel.*

Honest Dealing.

It may be that some of our boys think of being merchants some day. If so, let them resolve to do business as honestly as Christ desires them to, and to do it for his sake, because it is right. Deal only in honest and useful goods. Never deceive as to quality. Seek only just profits. Do not try to make money fast. If you haste to be rich, you will not be innocent: somebody will be wronged. Deal justly and honestly, even if you should lose at times. Ruskin says that "sixpences have to be lost under a sense of duty, that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit, and trade its heroisms as well as war."

For the Myrtle.

Grandpa's Wooing.

COME to my arms my darling,
You are wee to go alone,
And the trackless path before you
Is a wild and thorny one.

I would shelter you from danger,
I would keep your feet from sin,
I would lead you, till you safely
On the heavenly path might win. E. M. B.

Sound Sleepers.

Warm-blooded animals, like the bears and dormice, go to sleep during the winter, and if it is cold, they continue in what we should call "a pretty solid snooze." The blood moves a little, and once in a while they take a breath. If the weather is at all mild, they wake up enough to eat. There are other animals that don t wake up all winter, and the strange part of it is, that they know beforehand whether they will wake up or not. Those that will wake during the winter lay up something to eat, just by their sides, when they go into their winter sleeping places. But those that do not wake up never lay up any food, for it would not be used if they did.

Mrs. Hall, writing for *Our Little Ones*, says:

"The little field mouse lays up nuts and grain. It eats some when it is partly awake of a warm day. The bat does not need to do this, for the same warmth that wakes him, wakes all the insects on which he feeds. He catches some and then eats. When he is going to sleep again, he hangs himself up by his hind claws.

"The woodchuck, a kind of marmot, does not wake; yet he lays up dried grass near his hole. What is it for, do you think? On purpose to have it ready the first moment he wakes in the spring. Then he can eat and be strong before he comes out of his hole.

"How many things are sleeping through the winter! Plants, too, as well as animals. What a busy time they do have in waking up, and how little we think about it."—*Sel.*

The surgeons say that cigarette smoking by boys produces heart disease, and that in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the rejection of would-be apprentices on account of this defect comes from excessive use of a milder form of the weed. This is a remarkable statement, coming, as it does, from so high an authority, and based on the results of actual examinations going on day after day, and month after month. It should be a warning to parents that the deadly cigarette is sure to bring about incalculable injury to the young.

For the Myrtle.

Our Friends.

JENNIE MILES is a very sociable little girl. She never wishes to play alone, and her doll Lucy, and her dog Zip share all her pleasures.

Even when she sits down to read, the doll and the dog are invited to come and look on at the books; "for," Jennie says "if a dog doesn't know his letters, he ought at least to enjoy himself looking at pictures."

Whether Zip is of the same opinion and endures the books patiently, we cannot say. But we are afraid that Jennie is like some other little selfish children that we know. She considers her own happiness, and she does not think as much as she ought whether she is, or is not studying the happiness of her companions.

She likes to have Zip near her, and whether he likes sitting dumbly by, and waiting while she reads, is a matter which she does not trouble herself about.

E. M. B.

The Larks of Scotland.

It is said that the larks of Scotland are the sweetest singing birds of earth. No piece of mechanism that man has ever made has the soft, sweet, glorious music in it that the lark's throat has. When the farmers of Scotland walk out early in the morning, they flush the larks from the grass. As the larks rise, they sing; and as they sing, they circle; and higher and higher they go, circling as they sing, until at last the notes of their voices die out in the sweetest strains that earth ever listened to.

Is it Easier Now?

"I'm sure if the Lord told me to do any thing I'd do it."

"But it couldn't be very pleasant to go and tell folks they were wicked," said Amy.

"Now, Amy," said Phil, "that's just like you—thinking whether it was pleasant. Twasn't any of Jonah's business whether it was pleasant or not, he just had to give a message."

"I don't know," persisted Amy, but speaking very slowly. "I know Jonah was wrong, but I'm not sure that it was any easier to take a message then than it is now."

Phil flushed up and felt half vexed for a moment, but Amy looked so quiet and pleasant that he knew she "couldn't mean any thing." What if he had made a fuss about going to the store now and then? He'd be glad enough to go if the Lord himself should send him?

"Which of you children will go an errand for me?" said Mrs. Roberts the next day. "It's to go down to Bridget Doyle's and tell her not to come here again. She was drunk at Aunt Sarah's yesterday, and I won't have her to wash for me, as she drinks. Come, now, Phil, I think you'd better go."

"O, mother, I don't want to! Perhaps Pat Doyle'll be at home and he's such a cross fellow, I—"

"Mother," said Amy, "I'll go. I'll tell Mrs. Doyle what you say, and may I take her little girl some jelly?—she's sick still."

"Yes, dear, take the jelly and a loaf of bread; I'll do what I can for the child, but I will not have a drunken woman wash for me."

So Amy started off. Do you think she liked to go? Indeed she did not. She almost trembled as she thought of Pat, and wondered if Bridget would tell him to chase her away for bringing such a message. But Amy belonged to a Band of Hope, and she had a plan for getting Mrs. Doyle to sign the pledge. So, though it was a very disagreeable errand, she started off at once.

I can't tell what she said, for I did not hear; all we know is that that very night Bridget Doyle came to the children's Band of Hope with her two boys, Tom and Jim, and signed her name, or rather made her mark to the pledge.

"Mother says it's all right," whispered Amy, "and you're to come to-morrow.

Phil was at the meeting, and when he saw Bridget Doyle come in and go straight to Amy's seat, it just flashed across him that his sister had persuaded the poor woman to "try again," and then he remembered what he had said about Jonah. He had been so sure he would have taken the message. Yet, Amy—who wasn't sure—was the one who had carried a message from God to that poor woman! And then a verse he had learned long before came back to Phil: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—*Sel.*

Politeness of Great Men.

Truly great men are polite by instinct to their inferiors. It is one element of their greatness to be thoughtful for others. The greatest men in the world have been noted for their politeness; indeed, many have owed their greatness mainly to their popular manners, which induced the people whom they pleased to give them an opportunity to show their power.

Many years ago the errand boy employed by a publishing house in a great city was sent to procure from Edward Everett the proof-sheets of a book he had been examining. The boy entered the vast library, lined from floor to ceiling with books, in fear and trembling; he stood in awe of this famous man and dreaded to meet him.

But Mr. Everett, turning from the desk where he was writing, received the lad with reassuring courtesy, bade him sit down, chatted kindly as he looked for the proof-sheets, and asked, "Shall I put a paper round them for you?" as politely as if his visitor were the President.

The boy departed in a very comfortable state of mind; he had been raised in his own self-respect by Mr. Everett's kindness, and he has never forgotten the lesson it taught him.—*Sel.*

THERE is no greater every-day virtue than cheerfulness. This quality is like sunshine to the day, or gentle, renewing moisture to the herbs. The light of a cheerful face diffuses itself, and communicates the happy spirit that inspires it. Be cheerful always. There is no path but will be easier traveled, no load but will be lighter, no shadow on heart or brain but will lift in the presence of determined cheerfulness.

THE best remedy for evil thoughts is to have the mind occupied with pure and ennobling thoughts. The mind can not be a vacuum. It must be filled—if not with the good, with that which is evil.

SELECTIONS FOR S. S. CONCERTS.

The Easter Loaves.

[It was formerly a custom at Twickenham to throw penny loaves to the poor children, from the steeple, on Thursday in Easter Week.]

All around the Twickenham steeple
Was gathered a crowd of waiting people
Watching the window, whence come out
The lad who scattered the loaves about,—

Mothers a few, and children many,
For each of the loaves was worth a penny.
Once in the year, you see, at least,
The Twickenham poor were given a feast!

Not much of a feast, perhaps you think,
You who have plenty to eat and drink,
But enough good bread was a feast to the people
Who gathered so close about Twickenham steeple.

Out stepped the lad, and the loaves fell fast,
Till all were scattered, the very last,
And each a home in an apron found,
Almost before it had touched the ground.

Merry laughter, and joyous shout,
From the scrambling girls and boys rang out;
But as the last loaf touched the earth,
A sound of sobbing broke through the mirth.

"It's little Polly!" a voice cried out,
"Whatever can she have been about?
She hasn't a single loaf—instead
She's a thump from one aside of her head!

"Here, child, take mine—see, it's brave and fat!
I'm poor, but I'm not so poor as that!
Your granny's blind, and not fit to do—
Look here, if some of 'em ain't grabbed two!

"You greedy things—hold your apron, child;
Now, then, there'll be some of this bread spiled—
O yes, there will, and you needn't stare—
If little Polly don't get her share!"

"You needn't call names," cried the "grabbers" of two;
"You talk as if we all of us knew!
How could we see that the child got none?
Here, Polly, we'er well content with one."

"I don't need mine!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!"
Once more the loaves seemed to fairly fly,
And the blue check apron, long and wide,
Was stuffed so full that it came untied.

And little Polly, with laughter sweet,
Faltered her thanks, and with flying feet
Rushed back to granny, alone and blind,
Who said, "Ay, God and his children are kind."

You must admit that some pleasant people
Lived in the shadow of Twickenham steeple.

O Lilies of Easter.

O lilies of Easter, open
Your hearts to the risen sun,
The dark of the night is over,
The cold of the winter done.
The birds are awake in the branches,
The children awake in the homes,
For over the hills the morning
Of beautiful Easter comes.

CHORUS.

Wake with the world, O children!
Rise with the sun, and sing!
Over our souls is risen
He who is Christ, our King.

O caroling children, open
Your hearts to the risen Lord,
For over the world is shining
The light of the living Word.
Though crucified, dead and buried,
He lives in our hearts and homes;
Then carol, O children, carol,
When beautiful Easter comes!

Easter.

I have no frankincense, no myrrh,
I have no spice, no oil;
But here are snowy roses, Christ,
Without a stain or soil.
O fairest Lord, for thy dear sake,
My roses take.

I have no silver, and no gem,
No virgin gold for thee;
But here are lilies white as light,
And sweet with purity.
O fairest Lord, for thy dear sake,
My lilies take.

[redacted]

MAKE haste, O man, to do
Whatever must be done;
Thou hast no time to lose in sloth,
Thy day will soon be gone.

HARVEST PAGE.

Hidden Seed

284.—ENIGMA.

I am composed of 32 letters
My 29, 23, 18, 10 is not cold.
My 17, 23, 6, 32, 13 is one of the planets.
My 21, 28, 30, 6, 12 give light at night.
My 25, 14, 30, 19 is a metal.
My 22, 30, 1 is worn on the head.
My 16, 23, 15, 15, 11 is not sad.
My 9, 2, 20, 18, 32 is an article of clothing.
My 27, 24, 7 is not young.
My 3, 17, 4 is a kind of fish.
My 8, 18, 5, 31 is a useful metal.
My 26, 27, 28 is a negative.
My whole is in Psalms. *Myrtie Daymon.*

285. — ANAGRAM.

Indk owrsd anc reevn ide. *Ethol Brown.*

286. — ENIGMA.

I am composed of 54 letters.
My 2, 49, 1, 46, 51 is a country in Europe.
My 6, 13, 8, 12, 14, 46, 19 is a country in Europe.
My 7, 3, 11, 20, 21, 22 is a country in Europe.
My 38, 39, 10, 42, 16, 15 is a country in Europe.
My 29, 7, 33, 5, 34, 42, 43, 17, 25, 26, 34, 2 is a country in America.
My 9, 1, 2, 18, 33, 51, 52, 45, 3, 7 is a city in the United States.
My 29, 53, 11, 37 is a country in South America.
My 31, 48, 46, 51, 34, 50 is a country in Africa.
My 27, 33, 7, 42, 36, 8, 30, 50, 51 is a country in Asia.
My 44, 33, 28, 53, 54, 46, 6 is a country in Asia.
My 49,24, 25, 33, 32, 46, 53 is a plain.
My 4, 10, 54, 35, 40, 41 is spirit.
My 23, 47, 1, 5, 18 is anger.
My whole is in the Bible. *Grace Miles.*

287.—ENIGMA.

[redacted]

288. — DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A consonant. A grown boy. What we should be. A kind of grain. The goddess of mischief. A vowel.
Ethol Brown.

279. — ENIGMA.

God bless our home.

280. — ANAGRAM.

The Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works.

281. — ENIGMA.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

282. — ANAGRAM.

Serve the Lord with gladness, come before his presence with singing.

283. — ENIGMA.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

CONUNDRUM.

Why should we suppose that they had beer in the ark? Because the kangaroo went in with hops, and the bear was always bruin (brewin).

OUR HARVESTERS.

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